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A NEWS PAPER TO INSPIRE
POSITIVE ACTION, POWERFUL
RESULTS



Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

CASA of Pinal County

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Inside this issue:

Race and Foster Care	2
Supreme Court Site Visit	2
CASA Voice	3
Who is PCCI?	3
Training Opportunities	4
CASA Volunteer Spotlight	5
DV Conference	5

CASA of Pinal County, the **PAPR**



Helping improve the lives of children in foster care

Phoenix Newspaper Comes To Florence

The *Arizona Capitol Times* of Phoenix recently came to the Pinal County Superior Court with Katie Meyers of CASA Arizona. With special permission of Judge White, the newspaper was allowed into the court following confidential protocol, and was given access to two Pinal County CASA volunteers as they advocated for their CASA children in court. A third CASA was also interviewed and the story was printed in the *Arizona Capitol Times* on July 27th. 2012.

The exposure was good for CASA programs around Arizona as the main audience for the Capital Times is state government leaders, the very people who fund programs like CPS, CASA and other important social services.

Welcome New CASA Volunteers

Marilyn Anderson * Pamela Bang * Bill Brown * Linda Cour * Kay Halverson * Amber Johnson * Tina Kaufman * Roberta Metzger * Halley Miller * Antoinette Nunez –Byrd * Alisha Polley * Bruce Robinson * Jim & Kally Reynolds

Our program is serving more children than ever before; our volunteer base now approaching 70 members!

Thank you all for being the voice for a foster child!

Race Issues in Foster Care– Courageous Conversations

Many of us feel uneasy about talking about race issues, especially in groups of diverse people. People often times are afraid of saying the wrong thing or perhaps someone else taking the statements/conversation in a way not intended by the speaker. These and other factors oftentimes lead to nothing being said but the fact is, many children in foster care come from a wide range of different racial back grounds and these children are often placed in homes where the foster family may be of a different race and have vastly different customs/belief systems and world views. Pinal County has a very diverse population and these are where our foster children come from.

Think about the transitions from the point of view of a foster child. Imagine what it must be like for a Caucasian child being raised by an African—American foster family. Or, a Native American child being placed in a home where all the family members are non – Native? How do children maintain their racial identity? How important is this really? Before we go any further, maybe we should hear from the children and listen to their stories as told in the below video link. This video is an excellent video that covers a very real aspect of foster care and it ' s impact on youth in care. It is very eye opening and worth a look....

<http://www.casey.org/Resources/Initiatives/KnowingWhoYouAre/video.htm>

**Video is worth 30 minutes of education credit.*

Training Resources

Reminder - 12 Education hours are required every year.
Please go to www.azcasa.org for more great training opportunities!

The Supreme Court Visits CASA Pinal County

CASA Pinal County recently was audited by the Arizona Supreme Court, Administrative Offices of the Court (AOC) as part of a three year review process. While we overall have a very good program that is growing larger than ever and serving more foster children, we have identified some areas in which we need to improve upon to meet both state and national CASA Program requirements. The areas that we will be focusing on and need improvement include the following:

1. **Contact Logs** - We need all CASA volunteers to turn in a contact log each month and make sure to visit your child each month, per the Court ' s agreement with the volunteer.
2. **CASA Reports** - Volunteers need to provide a report for the court for all permanency plan and status review hearings.
3. **Education Requirements** - Volunteers are required to get 12 hours of continued education each year.
4. **Annual Evaluations** - Feedback shared between Coordinators and CASA volunteers addressing volunteer needs and coordinator feedback for volunteers.

Please help our program comply with state rules and court regulations. See your coordinator if you have any questions/concerns.

What our CASA Volunteers are saying:

Question: What advice can you offer a new Casa volunteer coming in to the “system ” for the first time and working with the assigned CPS case manager?

“ As a CASA you are considered a highly prestigious individual who represents not only the court but a wonderful child. Many of these children need a voice to which you are in many of the situations these children find themselves in. Representing a child is one of the best feelings you will ever have, knowing you are making a difference in their life. Working with the CPS case manager is also a great benefit, in that you have a great deal to learn from them. Many of these case managers have overwhelming caseloads and usually benefit from having a CASA working with the child one on one.

The journey of a CASA is adventurous, fulfilling, and exceptional. With that said, sit back, relax and enjoy the CASA ride. It is one you will never forget! ” - Angella McConnell, working on her 4th CASA case

“ I never gave up on my CASA child... 7 1/2 years, many miles, 15 court reports, over 80 contact logs... I made a commitment to him and I took that commitment seriously, and I grew to love that kid! ”... Name withheld at CASA ’s request (This CASA stood by the child until he aged out of foster care at 18 this month.)

Getting to Know Local Resources: PCCI



As our program continues to grow, we have many new volunteers in the Gold Canyon, Apache Junction, Maricopa and San Tan Valley area who have not lived in the area for many years, like some of our volunteers. Many new CASA volunteers may never have heard of PCCI, or have even been to Casa Grande for that matter! Our goal is to bring to your attention in each newsletter, a different resource that may be of assistance to a CASA case.

What is PCCI? Pinal Council for CASA/Foster Inc (PCCI) is a 501 3 © non profit organization that was founded in Casa Grande in 2004 by Lynda Williams and Carmen Auza. PCCI has had a long history of supporting foster children in Pinal County in many ways to include the annual PCCI Christmas Party, Aquatics event, back to school supplies, and has also networked with other non – profit groups in their continual support of foster children. PCCI has always had another focus on foster kids: educational needs. PCCI has formed a relationship with Central Arizona College and Sylvan Learning Systems that has proven to be beneficial to our youth in care.

As to the CASA Volunteer, PCCI has generously provided our volunteer gas card raffles that we use each quarter. For those Volunteers who have attended our all day in-service trainings, PCCI was kind enough to pay for the lunch and snacks for the past two years!

For more information about PCCI, please visit their website: www.pccinow.org.

Upcoming Training Opportunities:

Are we over medicating our foster kids with psychotropic drugs? This is a great training video worth 30 minutes of education credit.

Video Link: [ABC 20/20 - Generation Meds*](#)

Additional information about this training can be found on the National CASA website, including the following:

"This is an excerpt from the ABC show 20/20, broadcast on December 2, 2011. For over a year, the show's producers and Diane Sawyer investigated the overuse of psychotropic medications on foster youth. Among the people interviewed are National CASA CEO Michael Piraino and former foster youth Ke'onte Cook, who was able to find a permanent home thanks to the support of a CASA program in Texas. The show is owned by ABC and is only shared here for educational purposes. Learn more about foster youth and psychotropic medications: http://bit.ly/foster_change..."

*If problems linking to the above video, paste the following into your web browser:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=pRyS5HEpd-A&list=PLE2833A9B24224839&index=1&feature=plpp_video

Free Special Education Training! Learn the education system and the rules of the road when it comes to special education. The Arizona Center for Disability Law is offering this training for free in Phoenix and Tucson as follows:

Phoenix - September 5th, 9am-12pm or 6pm-9pm Disability Empowerment Ctr, 5025 E Washington Street
Tucson - September 6th, 9am-12pm or 6pm-9pm Windmill Suites, 4250 N. Campbell Ave

To register, please contact the Center by calling 1-800-927-2260 or send an email to kvanhome@azdisabilitylaw.org.

In-Service Trainings and Peer Support Meetings

As summer is winding down, CASA Pinal County is working on finalizing a couple Peer Support meetings and an all day Saturday training for the upcoming months. Please watch your email; announcements will soon follow.

REMEMBER:

- ☐ Never get discouraged, there's always another day.
- ☐ Feeling stuck? Unsure what to do? Call us! We are here to support the volunteers! 520-866-7076
- ☐ Knowledge is power so get as much information as possible before drawing conclusions.
- ☐ Be prepared always when dealing with authority figures for the child.
- ☐ Views by a CASA may be challenged, but if you feel you are right, fight for the child.
- ☐ When it comes to CASA, who is Michael Piraino? E-mail Gina at redmond@courts.az.gov with the correct answer and the first correct CASA wins a prize.!
- ☐ Every child in Foster Care deserves a CASA, your child got one. Help us recruit more volunteers.



Helping Kids Find Permanency- CASA Pinal County- Dan Danser

When Dan Danser first became a CASA, he took a difficult case that looked as if there was no hope for the family as their problems were great and there was a very real possibility of the children being severed from their parents. However, Dan has seen challenging times in the past as a Department of



Corrections employee (retired) and as an Army helicopter pilot during the Vietnam War. Dan rolled up his sleeves and got busy on behalf of the children while working as a team member involved with the family.

“When you look at the totality of it, it looked like a failure waiting to happen but as it turned out, the parents got involved and everything turned 180 degrees. In the beginning it looked like things were not going to happen. The family made the required changes and the case ended in family reunification. It was rewarding to see how people can and do change. It gave me incentive to keep going”.

Dan finds CASA work very enjoyable “My whole job in CASA is to advocate for the needs of the child and the child’s best interest”.

17th Annual Domestic Violence Conference

Registration has begun for the 17th Annual Domestic Violence Conference:

“DV Full Circle; Impact and Recovery”

When- November 7th, 2012 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM

Where- Holiday Inn 777 N. Pinal Ave, Casa Grande, AZ 85122

Cost-\$50.00 (includes a continental breakfast and lunch)*

To Register: Phone 520-836-0858 Email sylviaprocera@against-abuse.org

**Scholarships may be available. Please contact the CASA Office if you are interested.*

**Don't forget to send
in those Contact
Logs. They are not
only important to
our program, but
they are required by
Court Policy.**

Be the one. Be a voice for a foster child.
